

1. . . . green was a fairy colour, and suitable for such a being as this knight, whose Green Chapel was nothing else than a fairy mound; a *balȝ berȝ*.¹

2.

. . . a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit were;

A balȝ berȝ bi a bonke þe brymme bysyde,

Bi a forȝ of a flode þat ferked þare;

þe borne blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade.²

3.

Debatande wiþ hymself quat hit be myȝt.

Hit hade a hole on þe ende and on ayþer syde,

And ouergrown wiþ gresse in glodes aywhere,

And al watz holȝ inwiþ, nobot an olde caue,

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he coupe hit noȝt deme

wiþ spelle (*SGGK* ll. 2179–84).

4. Tolkien, in his W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture on 15 April, 1953 said:

Now we, and no doubt many of our poet's audience, may not be surprised by [the Green Knight riding off holding his severed head]. If we are introduced to a green man, with green hair and face, on a green horse, at the court of King Arthur, we expect "magic"; and Arthur and Gawain should have expected it also, we think. As indeed most of those present seem to have done: "a phantom and fay-magic folk there thought it" (l. 2400).³

5. Forþi for fantoum and fayryȝe þe folk þere hit demed.

6. We have in fact reached the point of intersection of two different planes: of a real and permanent, and an unreal and passing world of values: *morals* in one hand, and in the other *a code of honour*, or a game with rules.⁴

¹ Tolkien, J. R. R. and E. V. Gordon. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925. 86 n. 151.

² Tolkien and Gordon, Editors. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. 2nd ed. Revised by Norman Davis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967. ll. 2171–74. All quotations from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are from this edition.

³ "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Monsters and the Critics*. London: Harper Collins, 1990. 75.

⁴ "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Monsters and the Critics*. London: Harper Collins, 1990. 89.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> and is copyrighted © 2007 by Lisa L. Spangenberg.

Comment: *launde* l. 2171 n. "glade, awn, field" [Ofr. *la(u)nde*] (TG-Davis 194). A & W "glade, field, grassy plain" (A & W 329). *lawe* l. 2171 n. "mound, knoll" [OE. *blāwe*] (TG-Davis 194). A & W "mound, hill" (A & W 329).

Comment: *balȝ* l. 2172 adj. "swelling with round, smooth surface" [OE. *balȝ*] (164). See ll. 2032, 967. A & W "smooth and rounded" (A & W 304). *MED* cites this line for "bulging, round (knoll); ?smooth" (*MED* *balgh* (b)). *berȝ* l. 2172 n. "mound" [OE. *Be(o)rg*] (TG-Davis 165). See ll. 2178. *MED* cites this line "A hill; a mound, barrow" (*MED* *bergh*).

Comment: *forȝ* l. 2173 n. "channel, bed" [OE. *furb*] (TG-Davis 182). Davis' note "This has been taken (as by *MED* under *fors*) as the first appearance in English of *force* 'waterfall'. But *ȝ* is . . . not elsewhere used with this value after *r* in a stressed syllable . . . The word is therefore presumably OE. *furb* 'furrow', used in the sense of watercourse. This also suits the scene better than 'waterfall', which would not be in place at the bottom of a valley." Refers to Emerson, *JEGP* xxi (1922): 405, and xxvi (1927): 257 (TG-Davis 125–26 n. 2173). Vantuono notes that Tolkien and Gordon, and Gollancz translate *forȝ* "waterfall" (Vantuono 229 n. 2173). *ferked* l. 2173 v. "to go, ride" here "flow" [OE. *fer(e)cian*] (TG-Davis 180).

Comment: *fantoum* l. 240 n. "illusion" [Ofr. *fanto(s)me*.] (TG-Davis 179). Burrow "illusion" (Burrow 1972, 93, n. 240). *MED* "That which deludes the senses or imagination; illusion (as of dream or hallucination) (*MED* *fantom* 2. (a)). Cites this line. *fayryȝe* l. 240 n. "magic" [Ofr. *faierie*.] (TG-Davis 179). "the supernatural" (A & W 317). Silverstein glosses *fayryȝe* as "illusion" (205 s. v. *fayryȝe*). Burrow "magic" (Burrow 1972, 93, n. 240). *MED* s. v. *faerie* "2. (a) Supernatural contrivance; enchantment, magic, illusion; also, something illusory, a phantom; (b) something incredible or fictitious, a figment" (*MED* s. v. *faerie* 2(a-b)).

Works Cited

- Andrew, Malcolm and Ronald Waldron Eds. *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*. Fourth ed. University of Exeter Press. Edward Arnold: Exeter, 2002.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. "Romance and Anti-Romance in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Philological Quarterly* XLIV (I) (1965): 30-37.
- Brewer, Derek S. "Gawayne and the Green Chapel." *Notes and Queries*. 193 (1948): 13.
- Burrow, J.A. *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966.
- Carson, Mother Angela Carson, O. S. U. "Morgain La é as the Principle of Unity in Gawain and the Green Knight." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 23 no. 1 (March, 1962): 3-16.
- Cawley, A. C. Ed. *Pearl Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. J. M. Dent and Sons, London, 1962.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Benson, Larry D. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
- Engelhardt, George J. "The Predicament of Gawain." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 16 (1955), 218-25. Rpt. in *Middle English Survey*, ed. Edward Vasta (Notre Dame, 1965), 57-69.
- Hulbert, J. R. "Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyȝt." *Modern Philology* Vol. XIII (December 1915): 49-78; Vol. XIII (April 1916): 113-154.
- Kittredge, George Lyman. *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight*. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1960.
- Puhvel, Martin. "Snow and Mist in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Folklore* Vol. 89 no. 2 (1978): 224-28.
- Robertson, D. W. Jr. 1954. "Why the Devil Wears Green." *Modern Language Notes* 69: 470-72.
- Silverstein, Theodore. Ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A New Critical Edition*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1984.
- Tolkien and Gordon, Editors. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. 2nd ed. Revised by Norman Davis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. Trans. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight Pearl Sir Orfeo*. Ballantine Books: New York, 1980.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". In *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Harper Collins: New York, 1997. 72-108.
- Vantuono, William. Ed. And Trans. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, 1999.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> and is copyrighted © 2007 by Lisa L. Spangenberg.